

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAITT
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 2365

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE, PINT, SY
SUBJ: A VIEW FROM THE LEFT: COMMENTS OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT
OFFICIAL ALBERT MANSOUR

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO NATIONAL MOVEMENT OFFICAL
ALBERT MANSOUR, THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN'S APRIL 23 COMMUNIQUE
IS A FORMULA FOR POLITICAL WARFARE, NOT POLITICAL DETENTE.
THE COMMUNIQUE SHOULD HAVE UNEQUIVOCALLY AFFIRMED THE NEED
TO BUILD A NATIONAL ARMY REPRESENTING ALL THE GROUPS WITHIN
THE COUNTRY, AND SHOULD HAVE NOTED THAT THE CAIRO AND RIYADH
ACCORDS GOVERNED THE PRESENCE OF PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON.
CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS, THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT
WOULD TAKE SOME TIME. ANY NEW POLITICAL CABINET SHOULD INCLUDE
TWO OR THREE MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT. IF A CABINET
INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT WERE FORMED,
SOME WAY MIGHT BE FOUND FOR INCORPORATING THE COMMITTEE
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OF THIRTEEN'S COMMUNIQUE INTO GOVERNMENT POLICY. END
SUMMARY.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF ON APRIL 25, ALBERT MANSOUR,
MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT'S CENTRAL POLITICAL COUNCIL,
SAID THE FOLLOWING:

3. THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN.

A. THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN'S APRIL 23 COMMUNIQUE WAS A FORMULA FOR POLITICAL WARFARE, NOT POLITICAL ENTENTE. THE COMMUNIQUE REPRESENTED A VICTORY FOR THE LEBANESE FRONT. CAMILLE CHAMOUN HOPED TO USE THE COMMUNIQUE AS A TROJAN HORSE TO ENTER THE GOVERNMENT AND THEN IN EFFECT TAKE IT OVER.

B. THE COMMUNIQUE WAS NOT ACCEPTABLE FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, THE COMMITTEE ITSELF WAS NOT REPRESENTATIVE. IT INCLUDED NEITHER RASHID KARAMI NOR ANY MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT. (MANSOUR NOTED SPECIFICALLY THAT BAHIJ TAKI-AD-DIN DID NOT REPRESENT THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT.) SECOND, THE COMMUNIQUE HAD FAILED TO DEAL CORRECTLY WITH THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES NOW FACING LEBANON: REBUILDING THE ARMY, AND THE PRESNECE OF THE PALESTINIAN AND CHRISTIAN MILITIAS.

4. WHAT THE COMMUNIQUE SHOULD HAVE SAID.

A. THE COMMUNIQUE SHOULD HAVE STATED UNEQUIVOCALLY THAT LEBANON'S MOST IMPORTANT NEED AT THE MOMENT WAS TO REBUILD A TRULY NATIONAL ARMY EQUITABLY REPRESENTING ALL GROUPS WITHIN THE COUNTRY. ACCORDING TO MANSOUR, THE PRESENT LEBANESE ARMY WAS IN EFFECT A MARONITE FORCE. MOST OF THE KEY POSITIONS WERE HELD BY MARONITE OFFICERS. THE RANKING

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MUSLIM OFFICERS WERE LITTLE MORE THAN MARONITES IN DISGUISE. RECRUITING FOR ORDINARY SOLDIERS WAS UNBALANCED. PHALANGE AND NLP MILITIA WERE ALLOWED TO JOIN THE ARMY. ANYONE RECOMMENDED BY THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT WAS EXCLUDED, AND THE ARMY INVESTIGATED ALL MUSLIM RECRUITS CAREFULLY TO MAKE SURE THEY HAD THE "PROPER" POLITICAL VIEWS. VICTOR KHOURY MIGHT BE A MAN OF GOOD FAITH, BUT HE WAS STRONGLY INFLUENCED BY THE LEBANESE FRONT. GABY LAHOUD SHOULD HAVE BEEN APPOINTED ARMY COMMANDER, BECAUSE HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO BUILD A TRULY MULTI-CONFESSIONAL FORCE.

B. IN ADDITION, INSTEAD OF CALLING FOR AN END TO ARMED PALESTINIAN ACTION, THE COMMITTEE'S COMMUNIQUE SHOULD HAVE: (A) CALLED FOR THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT TO ESTABLISH ITS SOVEREIGNTY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY; AND (B) NOTED THAT THE RIYADH AND CAIRO ACCORDS GOVERNED THE PRESENCE OF THE PALESTINIANS IN LEBANON, AND THAT ANY MODIFICATION OF THESE ACCORDS SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE GOL AND PLO.

5. THE NEW CABINET.

A. CONTRARY TO PRESS REPORTS, THERE WAS GOING TO BE A

LONG PERIOD OF BARGAINING BEFORE THE FORMATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT. EVERYONE HAD MORE OR LESS AGREED THAT PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS SHOULD BE REAPPOINTED, BUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE CABINET WAS FAR FROM DECIDED.

B. IF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT WERE GIVEN TWO OR THREE MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS, IT WOULD ACCEPT A POLITICAL CABINET. THESE PORTFOLIOS, HOWEVER, HAD TO GO TO PEOPLE WHO WERE ACTUALLY MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT, NOT JUST INDIVIDUALS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH IT. THERE SHOULD BE SOMEONE FROM AL-MURABITUN AND THE PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP), FOR EXAMPLE. THE LEBANESE FRONT, HOWEVER, WAS PUTTING STRONG PRESSURE ON SARKIS TO EXCLUDE THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT FROM THE CABINET.

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C. THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT UNDERSTOOD THAT SOMEONE REPRESENTATIVE

SENTING THE SYRIAN VIEWPOINT WOULD HAVE TO BE IN THE NEW CABINET, E.G. ASIM QANSUH OR KAML SHATILA. (MANSOUR NOTED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN SYRIAN AND THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT HAD IMPROVED AS A RESULT OF SADAT'S VISIT TO JERUSALEM AND THE ISREALI INVASION OF SOUTH LEBANON.)

D. IF THE CABINET DID NOT INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE PARTIES, INCLUDING THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT, THE PREVIOUS FORMULA SHOULD BE USED AGAIN: A CABINET COMPOSED OF PEOPLE WITH NO IMPORTANT POLITICAL CAREERS OF THEIR OWN.

6. POSSIBLE SOLUTION.

A. IF A TURLY REPRESENTATIVE CABINET WERE FORMED, THERE MIGHT BE A "WAY OUT" WHICH WOULD INCLUDE USING THE COMMITTEE OF THIRTEEN'S COMMUNIQUE AS AT LEAST THE NOMINAL BASIS FOR CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY. AFTER THE CABINET WAS FORMED, A MINISTERIAL STATEMENT COULD BE ISSUED INTERPRETING THE COMMUNIQUE TO MEAN THAT: (A) THE ARMY SHOULD BE A TRULY NATIONAL FORCE; AND (B) THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ESTABLISH ITS PRESENCE THROUGH THE COUNTRY, AND THE CAIRO AND RIYADH ACCORDS SERVED AS THE BASIS OF THE PALESTINIAN PRESENCE IN LEBANON.

7. COMMENTS:

A. WE SUSPECT THAT MANSOUR'S PROFESSED DISSATISFACTION WITH THE COMMITTEE'S COMMUNIQUE STEMS AS MUCH FROM FEARS THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM THE CABINET AS FROM THE COMMUNIQUE'S CONTENT. A COUPLE OF PORTFOLIOS FOR THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT MIGHT EASE MANSOUR'S OBJECTIONS CONSIDERABLY.

B. MANSOUR WAS GENERALLY GLOOMY, AND INTER ALIA CLAIMED MUSLIMS OF ALL STRIPES SAW SARKIS BEING INFLUENCED MORE AND MORE BY THE LEBANESE FRONT. ONE BRIGHT NOTE: MANSOUR THOUGHT THAT BOTH CHRISTIANS AND SYRIANS HOPED TO AVOID A NEW CONFRONTATION WITH EACH OTHER, AND THAT FULL-SCALE CIVIL WAR BETWEEN LEBANESE WAS IMPOSSIBLE AS LONG AS THE SYRIAN ARMY WERE HERE. END COMMENT. PARKER

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